



The U.S. Army Combat Capabilities Development Command (DEVCOM) leads in the discovery, development and delivery of technology-based capabilities to enable Soldiers to win our nation's wars and come home safely. DEVCOM is a major subordinate command of the U.S. Army Futures Command. The DEVCOM Chemical Biological Center is the Army's principal research and development center for chemical and biological defense technology, engineering and field operations. The DEVCOM Chemical Biological Center is headquartered at Aberdeen Proving Ground, Maryland.

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## Army Chemist Receives Award for STEM Innovation

By Jerilyn Coleman



DEVCOM CBC research chemist Dr. Jared DeCoste is the 2021 recipient of the Joseph D. Wienand NDIA CBRN Division STEM Excellence Award.

**Aberdeen Proving Ground, MD** – Dr. Jared Decoste, a researcher at the U.S Army's Combat Capabilities Development Command Chemical Biological Center (DEVCOM CBC) is the inaugural recipient of a prestigious award honoring innovation and achievement in Science Technology Engineering Mathematics (STEM) education among STEM professionals.

DeCoste received the 2021 Joseph D. Wienand National Defense Industrial Association (NDIA) Chemical Biological Radiological Nuclear (CBRN) Division Science Technology Engineering Mathematics (STEM) Excellence Award on August 18, during the NDIA CBRN Defense Conference. This award recognizes individuals who demonstrate great overall STEM

achievement and efforts that significantly impact CBRN defense programs. DeCoste received a plaque during a ceremony at the conference and a \$500 donation to the CBRN academic program of his choice.

DeCoste is a research chemist for the Center's Chemical Biological Protection and Decontamination Division. He leads efforts to design new materials that can decontaminate chemical threats to help protect U.S. and allied warfighters. He also mentors students in various internship programs at the Center.

DeCoste said he has been intrigued by science from an early age. "My father was in the U.S. Air National Guard and I grew up around military families. That's where the DoD aspect came from. In graduate school my advisor worked on an Army-funded project to develop novel materials for reacting chemical warfare simulants. When I graduated, CBC was always a natural draw," he said.

DeCoste's contributions to science and the nation don't end when he leaves the DEVCOM CBC complex at Aberdeen Proving Ground in Maryland. During the pandemic, DeCoste spent a lot of his free time creating science projects with his children. Those experiments inspired DeCoste to create a YouTube Channel with instructional videos which shows parents how they can do simple experiments at home with their young children. Decoste also spends time in the community, engaging with college students and sharing his professional experience with them.



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Currently DeCoste is involved in educational partnership agreements with Harford Community College, Cecil College and UMBC-Shady Grove to bridge the gap between biotechnology and future scientists. He and other Center scientists will provide externships for students, giving them the opportunity to gain hands-on experience in Center laboratories, and will also visit the colleges as guest lecturers. “What are we going to be able to develop in the next 30-50 years? That’s an important question. It’s not just about developing the latest technologies, it’s about developing the people who can help develop technologies that are way more complex than the technologies that we’re thinking about today,” DeCoste said.

The Joseph D. Wienand NDIA CBRN STEM Excellence Award honors junior and mid-level researchers or scientists with 10 years of experience or less whose personal and professional accomplishments greatly impact the United States CBRN defense community through the development of products, systems, or processes. Vice chair of the NDIA CBRN Division, Retired BG William E. King IV, said, “DeCoste’s nomination unanimously stood out for his accomplishments in such a short time of service as a scientist with DEVCOM CBC. His nomination packet exemplified the total person’s perspective not only as a scientist but also his work within the community.”



Joseph D. Wienand (left) and Vice Chair of the NDIA CBRN Division Retired BG William E. King IV present Dr. Jared DeCoste (center) with the inaugural Joseph D. Wienand NDIA CBRN Division STEM Excellence Award.

The award was named in honor of Joseph D. Wienand, who served as director of DEVCOM CBC (then known as the Edgewood Chemical Biological Center) from 2010-2014. Over the years, Wienand championed several STEM programs, and this award acknowledges the lasting impacts he has made and continues to make. “I was very honored that the NDIA CBRN Division considered naming an award after me,” Wienand said. “They are a great group that has pulled our community together when times were good or bad and they always help to inform and unite the CBRN community.”

According to DEVCOM CBC Director Dr. Eric L. Moore, this award is just

one example of the Center’s goal to prioritize people. “It’s really a full circle moment that displays the CBC community’s dedication to investing in the future of our workforce. My predecessor, Mr. Wienand has always been a champion for the CBRN defense community and STEM profession, and in my time at CBC, I’ve watched Dr. DeCoste excel as a scientist and dedicate his time to helping others through leading by example. His volunteerism to provide learning opportunities for the community is inspiring,” Moore said.

DeCoste hopes that this award program provides awareness and starts important conversations about how his colleagues throughout the CBRN community can incorporate STEM outreach into their personal and professional lives. “It’s really incumbent upon all of us to be part of driving the future workforce because that’s the only way that the next generation will be better than our generation,” DeCoste said.



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